

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 309 498

CS 506 775

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TITLE How Newspaper Advertising Sales Managers Spend Their Time: A Pilot Study.
PUB DATE Aug 89
NOTE 18p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (72nd, Washington, DC, August 10-13, 1989).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Administrative Organization; Administrator Responsibility; *Administrators; *Advertising; *Newspapers; Occupational Surveys; Personnel Management; Retailing; Sales Occupations; *Time Management
IDENTIFIERS Management Practices; Time Studies

ABSTRACT

A pilot study examined how newspaper advertising sales managers in five southwestern states spend their time during a typical work day. Of the 360 questionnaires mailed, 176 responses were received. The largest number of responses (93) came from retail sales managers of newspapers in markets with less than 50,000 population. The questionnaire elicited both quantitative and qualitative data through both closed- and open-ended questions in seven categories. Respondents worked an average of 45 hours per week. Almost 14 hours each week were used in supervising personnel, while 11.92 hours were consumed each week in planning and setting goals. Sales managers spent 9.52 hours working with clients. Their remaining time was used in public relations (5.93 hours) and managing budgets (4.37 hours). Respondents were also asked to list their top five criteria for evaluating sales personnel, which were: sales ability and results, aggressiveness, communications skills, reliability, and confidence. (Eight tables of data are included.) (MG)

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HOW NEWSPAPER ADVERTISING SALES MANAGERS SPEND THEIR TIME: A PILOT STUDY

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Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Association for Education in
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1989.

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HOW NEWSPAPER ADVERTISING SALES MANAGERS SPEND THEIR TIME: A PILOT STUDY

ABSTRACT

In trying to determine what it is that newspaper advertising sales managers do during their typical day, the authors sent questionnaires to 360 newspaper retail advertising sales managers at papers in Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas.

The results, broken down by circulation, describe activities in five general categories: supervising personnel; identifying, planning and setting goals; working with clients; public relations; and, managing budgets.

Respondents were also asked to list their top five criteria for evaluating sales personnel, which were: sales ability and results, aggressiveness, communications skills, reliability and confidence.

HOW NEWSPAPER ADVERTISING SALES MANAGERS SPEND THEIR TIME: A PILOT STUDY

Many resources are important in the operation of the mass media including such items as newsprint, ink, computer terminals, television cameras and the like. An important media resource not often identified as such, and not often studied, is time.

In any business, mass media included, time must be considered as a scarce resource, and as such, it must be managed.¹ When time is viewed as a scarce, nonrenewable (though constantly available) resource, it attains both monetary and nonmonetary values that affect behavior.²

To provide a sense of orderliness, and to a degree, to help dispel uncertainty, people divide time into segments and allocate it over a multitude of tasks and activities. Various individuals and organizations do this differently.³

How people in the mass media spend their time then becomes of importance for the success of the specific medium where they are employed, and of interest to mass media educators as they contemplate appropriate coursework to prepare their students to enter the various media fields.

¹ Jacquelyn B. Schriber & Barbara A. Gutek, "Some Time Dimensions of Work: Measurement of an Underlying Aspect of Organizational Culture," *JOURNAL OF APPLIED PSYCHOLOGY*, 72:4 (1987), 642-650.

² M. Fichman, "A Theoretical Approach to Understanding Employee Absence," in *Absenteeism: New Approaches to Understanding, Measuring and Managing Employee Absence*, P. Goodman, ed., San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1984, 1-46.

³ Schriber & Gutek, *op. cit.*

HOW MANAGERS SPEND THEIR TIME

Studies of how managers in various fields spend their time reveal at least one constant: managers spend a large portion of their time working with people.

A British study of managers in manufacturing firms used a self-report time sheet to determine how the managers spent their time. Results from the 76 managers involved in the study showed that the average work week was 41.5 hours long. The managers spent that time in the following activities: production planning, maintenance and programming-- 42%; personnel, management policy-- 30%; budgets-- 9%; external interests-- 7%; personal and not recorded-- 6%; research and development-- 6%.⁴ As much as 30% of these managers' time was spent working with other people.

Carlson⁵ queried 200 managers about time spent with various activities and found the managers in his study spent 65% of their time in conferences; 18% of their time working alone; 5% of their time in lunches; 3% of their time in travel; and 9% in miscellaneous activities. A large portion of their time-- 65%-- was spent working with other employees.

Mahoney, Jerdee & Carroll⁶ described the activities of "typical" managers, based on research in a number of manufacturing operations as: supervising--28.4%; planning--19.5%; coordinating--15%; evaluating--12.7%; investigating--12.6%; negotiating-- 6%; staffing--4.1%; and representing--1.8%. This study indicates as much as 68% of these managers' time was spent working with other people.

⁴ Tom Burns, "Management In Action," *OPERATIONAL RESEARCH QUARTERLY*, 8(2):45-60 (1957).

⁵ Sune Carlson, *Executive Behaviour*, Stockholm:Strombergs, 1951.

⁶ Thomas A. Mahoney, Thomas H. Jerdee & Stephen J. Carrol, "The Jobs of Management," *INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS*, 4(2):97-110, (Feb. 1965).

Media managers, according to one study⁷, spent their time doing the following: supervising-- 20-30%; planning-- 15-25%; coordinating-- 15-18%; evaluating-- 10-14%; investigating-- 11-13%; negotiating-- 6-7%; staffing-- 4-4.5%; and, public relations-- 1.5-2%. As much as 73% of these managers' time was spent working with their personnel.

It is no surprise that managers spend some of their time working with other people. What the review of literature shows, which may be surprising, however, is that managers from diverse fields spend from as little as 30% to as much as 73% of their time working with personnel.

The present study, a pilot study, is an attempt to get a handle on how one group of media managers-- newspaper retail advertising sales managers-- spends its time. Such information would prove useful for a number of reasons. Identifying how media managers spend their time in what kinds of activities may provide insight into the relative importance of those specific activities.

When coupled with other research, such information may help with the evaluation and/or prediction of success or failure of managers in certain publications. It may also help with the evaluation of potential managers for such positions on a newspaper. For example, successful account executives may not possess the personality or work characteristics (including time management skills) to also be a successful sales manager.

Results of the present study may also be useful in evaluating college and university curricula, to ensure that the required list of courses coincides with the skills needed to perform the tasks required of a media sales manager.

This study, then, focuses on 1) how newspaper advertising executives, specifically sales managers, spend their time in a typical week; and, 2) what criteria are used for evaluating sales personnel.

⁷ Daniel B. Wackman, Charles T. Salmon & Caryn C. Salmon, "Key Factors in Developing an Advertising Agency-Client Relationship," JOURNAL OF ADVERTISING, 26(6): 21-28, 1986.

Previous studies of how newspaper advertising sales managers allocate and use their time could not be located.

METHOD

A questionnaire was mailed to 360 newspaper retail advertising sales managers in Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas during the summer of 1988. The initial survey produced 132 responses. Two follow-up questionnaires were mailed to non-respondents at three week intervals. After the final mailing, a total of 176 sales managers, or 48.8%, had returned completed questionnaires (See Table 1).

The market sizes were stratified by population estimates projected for 1988 in the 1988 Editor and Publisher Yearbook. The market sizes were categorized as: those under 50,000; 50,000 to 199,999; 200,000 to 499,999; and, more than 500,000. Because there were fewer than 100 dailies in the top three market size categories in the survey area, a cover letter and a questionnaire were mailed to each of the 200 daily newspapers in the survey area, regardless of market size.

Another 160 weekly newspapers, systematically selected to represent each of the four market size categories, were added to the list of 200 dailies, in an attempt to get a response rate from each size category that could be evaluated statistically.

The questionnaire elicited both quantitative and qualitative data through both closed- and open-ended questions in seven categories. Five categories requested sales managers to identify the amount of time they spent on a weekly basis performing specific tasks and duties listed in the questionnaire. Respondents could also include additional comments in each category. One section of the questionnaire, through open-ended questions, sought information regarding criteria for evaluating sales personnel. The final section contained requests for personal and market demographic data. The data were computed and reported as the average amount of time devoted to specific activities during a normal work week.

FINDINGS

A total of 176 questionnaires were returned by retail advertising sales managers representing newspapers in the five states (Table 1). The largest number of responses, 93 (52.8%) came from retail sales managers of newspapers in markets with less than 50,000 population. Another 60 responses (34.1%) came from managers in markets with populations between 50,000 and 199,999. Thirteen questionnaires (7.4%) were returned by respondents representing newspapers in markets with populations between 200,000 and 499,999, and 10 respondents (5.7%) represented newspapers in markets with populations over 500,000.

Only activities with a mean of one hour or more were reported in the tables. Because of the small number of responses from the two larger markets, no statistical analysis, other than frequencies and means, was performed among the markets.

Use of Time. Retail sales managers who responded to the survey worked an average of about 45 hours per week (Table II). Almost 14 hours (30.4%) each week were used in supervising personnel, while 11.92 hours (26.1%) were consumed each week in planning and setting goals. Sales managers spent 9.52 hours (20.9%) working with clients. Their remaining time was used in public relations (5.93 hours or 13%) and managing budgets (4.37 hours or 9.6%). Sales managers in larger markets reported that they worked more hours each week than sales managers in smaller markets.

Supervising Personnel. Sales managers spend a major part of their time with personnel (Table III). Of the several weekly activities retail sales managers listed under supervising personnel, five were cited as most time consuming: (1) motivating sales personnel- 2.22 hours; (2) training sales personnel- 1.97 hours; (3) teaching advertising copywriting- 1.64 hours; (4) evaluating sales personnel- 1.38 hours; and (5) solving staff personal problems- 1.17 hours.

Sales managers in large markets (50,000 plus population) reported spending more time on motivating, training and evaluating sales personnel than smaller market sales managers. However, small market sales managers tended to spend more time in teaching advertising copywriting than sales managers in larger markets.

Identifying, Planning and Setting Goals. Retail sales managers listed six activities in planning that required most of their time: (1) sales promotions- 3.41 hours; (2) increasing market share- 1.6 hours; (3) organizing marketing plans- 1.52 hours; (4) setting sales goals- 1.39 hours; (5) developing advertising campaigns- 1.36 hours; and (6) identifying new clients- 1.25 hours (Table IV).

Respondents from the four market sizes replied that they spent about equal amounts of time on sales promotions, increasing market shares, organizing marketing plans and identifying new clients. However, sales managers in the two larger market categories spent more time in setting sales goals than sales managers in the two smaller size market categories.

Working With Clients. Sales managers indicated that they expended almost 10 hours each week working with clients. Table V shows that managers: (1) developed advertising campaigns for clients- 1.96 hours; (2) worked with regional and national advertising representatives- 1.56 hours; (3) explained advertising rates- 1.37 hours; and (4) planned client sales strategies- 1.29 hours.

Sales managers in markets with populations under 50,000 reported spending more time in developing advertising campaigns and explaining advertising rates than their counterparts in larger markets. Respondents representing newspapers in the three largest market categories tended to spend more time in working with regional and national advertising representatives than smaller market sales managers.

Public Relations. Sales managers listed a total of 15 activities relating to public and community relations. However, only two of the public and community relations activities consumed a mean of more than one hour per week (Table VI). Sales managers in markets with populations under 50,000 spent more time with community groups and non-profit organizations than sales managers in markets with populations over 50,000.

Managing Budgets. Sales managers tended to use more than three hours each week on setting sales commissions, reviewing overhead costs and setting advertising rates (Table VII). Respondents used the least amount of weekly time in this category.

Sales managers in markets with populations of more than 200,000 reported using more than twice the amount of time in reviewing and setting advertising rates than sales managers in smaller markets. Sales managers, regardless of market size, tended to spend about the same amount of time on setting sales commissions and reviewing overhead expenses.

Criteria for Evaluating Sales Personnel. The last section of the questionnaire was an open-ended question. Retail sales managers were asked to list the top five criteria for evaluating sales personnel. Based on the perception of the authors, similar comments were grouped together and are reported in Table VIII. The managers seemed to want sales personnel who get results and who exhibit communication skills, enthusiasm, cooperation and reliability. They also preferred sales personnel who are aggressive and confident.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this pilot study suggest that the amount of time spent on many weekly activities by retail advertising sales managers varies among market sizes. Collectively, the managers spend almost 53% of their time working with personnel. However, the number of responding newspapers in markets with populations of 50,000 or more in the survey area is too small to statistically compare survey response data among market categories.

This study also suggests that a newspaper retail advertising sales manager must be a multi-talented person who works an average of 9 hours each work day, Monday through Friday. The tables in this report list 19 different activities or duties performed by retail sales managers. However, the number of individual responses included in the tables and in the All Other Activities category total 76.

The authors conclude that retail advertising sales managers must be experienced and knowledgeable in areas of personnel, media, marketing and accounting. How important each activity performed by sales managers is to the success of a newspaper tends to vary among market sizes. For instance, sales managers in large markets use more time in supervising personnel than small market sales managers perhaps because there may be more employees to supervise in the larger market newspapers. Small market sales managers do more direct selling and copywriting than major market managers.

The authors also note that the criteria most often cited as important for evaluating sales personnel are not media- nor advertising-specific. They are criteria which could be applied in any areas of sales.

The authors suggest additional research following from this pilot study should include a sample of advertising sales managers from throughout the United states. Instead of comparing market sizes, future research may compare responses by circulation and frequency of publication. Circulation size may more accurately determine sales managers' daily and weekly activities. Circulation and frequency of publication may influence one's activities more than other factors. For example, sales managers of daily newspapers may meet more frequently with the sales staff than sales managers of weekly publications.

This study did not attempt to determine the amount of time account executives devote to specific activities. Additional research is needed to compare the time used and activities performed by account executives to the same variables for sales managers.

Also, sales managers and account executives may rank the importance of activities differently. Future research could compare such rankings to the amount of time actually spent on each activity by both groups.

From the data in this pilot study, one may deduce that newspaper retail advertising sales managers should be educated in areas of media and in areas of marketing. In order to ensure that students are prepared to deal with the situations mentioned by the respondents to this study, the regular advertising education curriculum should be supplemented with adjunct courses from business administration, personnel management and accounting.

TABLE I
RESPONSES BY MARKET SIZE

Market Size	Responses	Percentage
Under 50,000 population	93	52.8
50,000-199,999	60	34.1
200,000 to 499,999	13	7.4
500,000 and over	10	5.7
Total Responses	176	100.0
Questionnaires Mailed	360	Return Rate 48.8

TABLE II
HOW NEWSPAPER ADVERTISING SALES MANAGERS SPEND THEIR TIME

Activity	Market Size*										Total
	1		2		3		4				
	Hours	% of Time	Hours	% of Time	Hours	% of Time	Hours	% of Time	Hours	% of Time	
1. Supervising Personnel	12.86	28.6	14.2	32.0	16.91	32.8	18.0	34.2	13.91	30.4	
2. Planning, Setting Goals	12.5	27.9	10.97	24.8	12.3	23.9	11.76	22.3	11.92	26.1	
3. Working With Clients	9.37	20.9	9.03	20.4	10.07	19.6	13.1	24.8	9.52	20.9	
4. Public, and Community Relations	6.29	14.0	5.47	12.3	6.46	12.5	4.4	8.3	5.93	13.0	
5. Managing Budgets	3.87	8.6	4.65	10.5	5.77	11.2	5.5	10.4	4.37	9.6	
Total Weekly Time	44.89		44.32		51.51		52.85		45.64		

* Market Size: 1= Under 50,000; 2=50,000-199,999; 3=200,000-499,999; 4=500,000 and over

TABLE III
MEAN HOURS SPENT WEEKLY ON SUPERVISING PERSONNEL

Activity	Market Size*				Total	
	1	2	3	4	Mean	SD
1. Motivating Sales Personnel	1.7	2.6	2.96	3.68	2.22	2.02
2. Training Sales Personnel	1.74	1.99	2.76	2.98	1.97	2.56
3. Training Ad Copy Writing	2.34	1.05	.41	.27	1.64	2.48
4. Evaluating Sales Personnel	1.03	1.77	1.9	1.7	1.38	1.26
5. Solving Staff Personnel Problems	.9	1.37	2.0	1.5	1.17	1.45
6. All Other Activities (11 Total)	5.15	5.42	6.88	7.96	5.53	
Total					13.91	10.0

TABLE IV
MEAN HOURS SPENT WEEKLY ON IDENTIFYING, PLANNING AND SETTING GOALS

Activity	Market Size*				Total	
	1	2	3	4	Mean	SD
1. Sales Promotion	3.71	2.90	3.38	3.57	3.41	1.52
2. Increasing Market Share	1.40	1.62	1.83	2.58	1.60	2.81
3. Organizing Marketing Plans	1.55	1.38	1.77	1.75	1.52	2.08
4. Setting Sales Goals	1.22	1.28	2.46	2.17	1.39	1.33
5. Identifying New Clients	1.1	1.46	1.7	1.0	1.25	1.07
6. All Other Activities (10 Total)	3.52	2.33	1.16	.7	2.75	
Total					11.92	6.3

TABLE V
MEAN HOURS SPENT WEEKLY WORKING WITH CLIENTS

Activity	Market Size*				Total	
	1	2	3	4	Mean	SD
1. Developing Ad Campaigns	2.47	1.36	1.4	1.45	1.96	2.42
2. Working With Regional, National Representatives	1.0	2.2	2.15	1.95	1.56	2.62
3. Explaining Ad Rates	1.6	1.07	1.0	1.55	1.37	2.01
4. Planning Client Sales Strategies	1.01	1.2	1.54	1.16	1.29	1.63
5. All Other Activities (13 Total)	3.29	3.2	3.98	6.99	3.34	
Total					9.52	7.9

* Market Size: 1=Under 50,000 population; 2=50,000-199,999; 3=200,000-499,999; 4=500,000 and over

TABLE VI
MEAN HOURS SPENT WEEKLY ON PUBLIC AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Activity	Market Size*				Total	
	1	2	3	4	Mean	SD
1. Membership In Community Groups	1.63	1.55	1.69	1.0	1.57	1.34
2. Working With Non-Profit Organizations	1.18	1.26	.92	.47	1.15	1.34
3. All Other Activities (13 Total)	3.48	2.66	3.85	2.93	3.2	
Total					5.92	4.1

TABLE VII
HOURS SPENT WEEKLY MANAGING BUDGETS

Activity	Market Size*				Total	
	1	2	3	4	Mean	SD
1. Reviewing And Setting Sales Staff Commission And Salary	1.07	1.58	1.38	1.59	1.30	1.32
2. Reviewing Overhead Expenses	.7	1.5	1.1	.76	1.01	1.8
3. Reviewing/Setting Ad Rates	.82	.95	1.77	1.86	1.0	1.23
4. All Other Activities (7 Total)	1.28	.62	1.52	1.29	1.06	
Total					4.37	3.49

* Market Size: 1=Under 50,000 population; 2=50,000-199,999; 3=200,000-499,999; 4=500,000 and over

TABLE VIII
CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING SALES PERSONNEL

Criteria	Frequency Mentioned
1. Sales Ability and Results	19
2. Aggressiveness	17
3. Communication Skills (oral/written)	17
4. Reliability	15
5. Confidence	13
6. Attitude and Enthusiasm	10
7. Cooperation With Other Employees	9